

迎亲习俗：家乡婚礼的第一幕

我的家乡坐落在江南水乡，那里的人们依旧保留着颇具仪式感的婚礼传统。迎亲，是整个婚礼仪式的第一幕，承载着对新人、两家人乃至整个村落的祝福和期待。

清晨，新娘在家中梳妆打扮，红盖头下，静待迎亲队伍的到来。迎亲车队往往用红绸缎装饰，锣鼓声响起，亲朋好友簇拥而至。新郎和伴郎哼唱着乡间小调，走过熟悉的巷道来到新娘家门前。

敲门礼是迎亲过程中的关键一环。新郎站在新娘家门外，手中往往捧着一篮象征吉祥的小礼物——如糖果、红枣、栗子。女方亲友会提出“考题”：例如“请说出新郎新娘相识的时间”“请唱一段乡歌”。这是为了调动气氛，也象征男方对女方家庭的尊重与诚意。

敲门成功后，新郎进入屋内迎接新娘。此刻，新娘家长微笑致意，亲友齐声祝福。随后进入敬茶环节：新人分别向双方父母奉上一杯热茶，茶杯装饰红色，寓意吉庆。父母喝茶后回份为红包，抑或鼓励新人结婚后的责任与担当。这一礼仪，既是对长辈的敬意，也是新人承诺家庭的宣言。

茶礼结束后，别具一格的“闹新房”环节应运而生。亲友团会在新房门前设置小游戏：捉迷藏、问答谜题、新郎要通过“考验”才能进入。新娘则坐在被祝福满布的花轿中。此时的闹房虽带着调皮与笑声，却也满载着祝福，希望新人在生活中如游戏般配合默契、快乐无忧。

看到迎亲这一整个流程，我仿佛看见古老而温柔的礼仪正在与我们同在。从最初的敲门到最后的新房闹剧，每一个细节都刻录着人与人之间的情感、人与家乡之间的纽带。这不只是两个家庭合并的仪式，更是家乡人情味的集中体现。

在现代社会，迎亲仪式也发生了变化：有的家庭简化流程、提高效率，有的新郎自驾、迎亲车换成旅游车。但无论形式如何改变，那份“新郎进女家”“敬茶”“众人闹新房”所代表的情感意涵，都在持续被继承。家乡婚礼的迎亲习俗，是我们对故乡文化的热爱，也是我们对亲情与友情的珍视。

这第一幕，承载了礼仪与温度，传统与当下，以及我们对文化的记忆与敬意。

The Bridal Procession: First Act of Hometown Wedding Traditions

My hometown lies in the water-bound region of Jiangnan, where people still preserve wedding traditions full of ritual and warmth. The bridal procession marks the first act of the wedding, carrying blessings and expectations for the couple, their families, and even the whole village.

At dawn, the bride is escorted in her home, adorned with a red veil, waiting quietly for the arrival of the procession. The bridal cortege is often decorated with red ribbons, the sound of gongs and drums fills the air, and relatives and friends gather. The groom and his groomsmen hum local folk songs as they walk down familiar

lanes toward the bride' s house.

The door-knocking ritual is a key part of the procession. The groom stands outside the bride' s door, holding a basket of auspicious small gifts—like candies, red dates, and chestnuts. The bride' s friends and family pose “tests” : for example “When did the bride and groom meet?” or “Sing a verse of a village song.” It' s meant to enliven the atmosphere and symbolize the groom' s respect and sincerity toward the bride' s family.

When the door-knocking is successful, the groom enters and greets the bride. At that moment, the bride' s parents smile and the guests offer blessings. Then comes the tea ceremony: the couple each offer a cup of hot tea to their parents. The teacups are decorated in red, symbolizing happiness. After drinking the tea, the parents respond with red envelopes, or with words encouraging the couple' s responsibilities and commitment after marriage. This ritual is both a sign of respect to elders and a declaration of the couple' s promise to build a family.

After the tea ritual, a playful “new-room teasing” takes place. Friends and relatives set games in front of the bridal chamber: hide-and-seek, quiz riddles, the groom undergoing “tests” to enter. The bride sits in the wedding sedan chair decorated with well-wishes. Although the teasing is full of laughs, it is loaded with blessings—hoping the new couple will cooperate like a game, joyful and carefree in life.

Watching the entire procession, I seem to see an ancient and tender ritual living alongside us. From the door-knock to the final new-room jests, every detail records the feelings between people, the bond with our hometown. It is not merely a union of two families, but the concentrated expression of hometown warmth.

In modern society, the bridal procession has changed too: some families simplify the process for efficiency, some grooms drive themselves, the wedding car becomes a tourist van. But no matter how the form changes, the emotional meaning represented by “the groom enters the bride' s house,” “tea ceremony,” “teasing the bridal room” continues to be passed on. The procession in a hometown wedding is our love for our native culture, and our regard for kinship and friendship.

This first act carries ritual and warmth, tradition and the present, and our memory and reverence for culture.